# The Metamorphosis of a Legend: Herobrine and Digital Folklore

Research conducted by Abdul Alhazred

Miskatonic University

*"Ex Ignorantia Ad Sapientiam; Ex Luce Ad Tenebras"*

Online forums, those digital corners where users share stories, theories and experiences, often become home to contemporary legends and myths. A few weeks ago, I came across the legend of a ghost that supposedly haunts these virtual spaces, a specter that appears on social media sites and leaves traces of its presence in the form of disturbing images and audio. Intrigued by the idea of the supposed ghost, not only as a supernatural figure, but as a folkloric phenomenon of the digital age, I decided to embark on an investigation that promised to help me understand internet culture.

Through several weeks of research I realized that this particular legend is of relatively recent creation, social media posts that talk about the story date back to May 21, 2024. Like many other urban legends there are several versions that tell the story differently, but there are certain aspects that remain constant, such as:

The story centers on two brothers (we are always told that they were very close)
The brothers have an argument (the topic of the argument varies)
A violent fight breaks out between the brothers
One of the brothers lunges at the other and rips out his eyes (this part is always described quite graphically and explicitly)
The dead brother becomes a spirit that haunts social media sites (how or why his spirit ended up on the internet is never explained)
The spirit of the dead brother always calls himself Herobrine (regardless of what name he had when he was alive, it is never explained why the name change or where it comes from)
Herobrine promises to get revenge on his brother by killing his son (the brother's son is never mentioned until the end of the story)

Looking at the dates and times of the first posts mentioning the story, I came across who I suspect is the first person to post the story, a user by the name of “Spectreman,” below is a transcript of our conversation:

- **John Thoms:** Good evening gentleman, I wanted to ask you if you are the creator of the story of “Herobrine”
- 
- **Spectreman:** Yes, tell me something, has it gone viral yet?
- 
- **John Thoms:** Yes, it has gone somewhat viral, but I don't think it will last long
- 
- **Spectreman:** What do you mean?
- 
- **John Thoms:** Well, you know, every legend must fall, no story lasts forever, people eventually get bored
- 
- **Spectreman:** You don't think my story is any good?
- 
- **John Thoms:** It's not that, it's just that your story has themes that young people today find very boring, vengeful ghost stories don't scare people like they used to.

- **Spectreman:** I don't really want to be scary, I just want to go viral. I wrote my story as if it were something scary because I saw that people used to make it go viral.
- 
- **John Thoms:** If you want some advice I would recommend you write a story about a topic that is already popular
- 
- **Spectreman:** I don't understand you
- 
- **John Thoms:** I mean you can do a horror story about something that is already widely known, a lot of people do stories about haunted video games and they become quite popular

After this message, the user “Spectreman” did not respond to any of my messages, I will leave my investigation here and continue tomorrow.

**Update:** Today I tried to talk to the user “Spectreman” again but to my surprise his account and our conversation have been deleted, as if it had never happened, luckily I still have the transcript.

Digging a little deeper into the legend of Herobrine, I found some versions of the story that have slight differences from what I had found yesterday. The new variations of the story include:

The story centers on two brothers who work as video game programmers at the same company
The brothers have an argument about the video game they're working on (it's not stated why the disagreement started)
A violent fight breaks out in the office
One of the brothers lunges at the other, strangles him, and then gouges out his eyes (this part is always the longest and most detailed part of the story)
The dead brother becomes a ghost that lives inside the video game they were developing
The ghost of the dead brother always calls himself Herobrine (it's stated that this name is a nickname his brother gave him)
Herobrine vows to get revenge on his brother by destroying the thing he loves the most (it's never specified what that is)
It's always mentioned that the brother died on May 21, 2024

I'm completely unaware of how I didn't notice these stories yesterday, I must have done a bad search. Tomorrow I'll check several websites I'd checked before in case I forgot something.

**Update:** This must be a mistake. Today I noticed that several young people on social media were passionately talking about the legend of Herobrine, what I find most strange is that those who tell the story talk about it as if it has existed for a long time, they claim that the legend has existed for more than 10 years. Is it possible that I am so bad at researching using the computer? I have been researching the origin of multiple legends since the 90s, I think I am getting old.

After quite a bit of reading I have noticed considerable differences with this version of the legend, not only in its structure, but also in its content. Here is a list of common features in the new variation of the legend:

The story centers on a man who is developing a video game
It is mentioned that the video game developer had a brother named Herobrine who was murdered a few years ago (it is not stated who the murderer was, we are only told that the murderer strangled him and gouged out his eyes)
The video game developer releases his game
The soul of the dead brother enters the video game
Multiple players report the appearance of a previously unknown entity named Herobrine
The video game developer attempts to eliminate the entity but fails
Herobrine vows to get revenge on the one who gouged out his eyes.
Herobrine creates a social media account called “Spectreman” which he uses to track down the man who killed him
The story ends with the video game developer in jail for the murder of his brother (it was never hinted that he was involved)

It is interesting to note that the person who started the legend, the user “Spectreman”, included himself in the story, his reasons are unknown.

I cannot find any social media account that is linked to the user “Spectreman”, I have also noticed that despite his renewed fame, no one seems to know who started the legend, there is conflicting information about the origin of the legend and its creator. He theorized that the person he had spoken to earlier was an impostor, there seems to be evidence that the legend is much older than I thought.

The confusion surrounding the figure of “Spectreman” and the origin of the Herobrine legend led me to delve even deeper into the dark recesses of the internet, where folklore mixes with this new digital culture.

Browsing through new forums, blogs and discussion groups, I found accounts of people claiming to have had supposedly real experiences with Herobrine. The anecdotes describe encounters in online games, where they claimed to have seen a strange figure appearing in their games, destroying their constructions and sending disturbing messages mentioning desires for revenge. No doubt a sign of youth showing their creativity.

**Update:** A new version of the story has been widely circulated on the internet, the most notable difference being a brief exchange between a police investigator and a man who is accused of his brother's murder, the following is the text to highlight:

**Ximénez:** This is Detective Francisco Ximénez de Quesada, from the Nodibalbá Police Department. Today's date is Wednesday, May 21, 2024. The time is 6:16 AM. This will be a recorded conversation with suspect Sak Utsil. Date of birth August 30, 1984.

**Ximénez:** Do you know why you are here Mr. Utsil?

**Sak Utsil:** Because of what happened with my brother.

**Ximénez:** Do you have any idea why your brother, Mr. Canek Noíl, behaved in that way?

**Sak Utsil:** I would like to know that.

**Ximénez:** Could you tell me what happened?

**Sak Utsil:** My brother and I had an argument, he was very upset, he became very violent and accused me of things that were not true. I don't know how it got out of control.

**Ximénez:** Could you be more specific about what kind of things you were talking about?

**Sak Utsil:** He said that I had betrayed him, that I was planning to leave him.

**Ximénez:** And then his brother attacked him?

**Sak Utsil:** He lunged at me with a knife and tried to stab me.

**Ximénez:** Are there any witnesses who can validate your version of events?

**Sak Utsil:** No, we were alone at home. No one else saw what happened. But I swear I didn't want to kill him. I just wanted him to stop.

**Ximénez:** Could you explain the eyes to me?

The text cuts off abruptly at this point, it is stated that the continuation of the story is in a short story called “Article 247: Penal Code”, but it seems to be just a rumor, I have been unable to locate that supposed story.

**Update:** Out of sheer curiosity, I decided to look up the names mentioned in the story I found yesterday, and was surprised to find a small section in a Mexican newspaper that mentions Sak Utsil. Below is the transcript:

*Sak Utsil's life has been marked by tragedy and grief. He was accused of murdering his brother in an incident that shocked the local community. Although Mr Utsil always maintained his innocence, as the only suspect, the police decided it was best to continue with the questioning.*

*The murder was eventually determined to have been an act of self-defence. The decision was greeted with relief by Sak and his only son.*

*"People don't understand what really happened that night," Sak says, "I didn't want this to happen, but I defended my life."*

**Conclusion:**

By connecting all the threads of the story, the enigma surrounding the figure of Herobrine becomes even more fascinating. The transformation of a tragic event into an urban legend shows how myths are born by deforming reality, transforming real events into fictional stories. The story of Herobrine, which apparently began as a simple online horror story, has become intertwined with elements of the real world.

As my research continued, new questions arose. What role does the figure of Sak Utsil play in the narrative? The way his story has become an integral part of the legend suggests that he himself may have been an unwitting collaborator in its construction. Being the only witness and, at the same time, the main suspect of the murder, his life has been caught in a web of rumors, conspiracy theories and speculation.

I suspect that the reported encounters with Herobrine are simply products of mass hysteria, driven by the virality of the urban legend. In the digital world, where misinformation and speculation can spread at breakneck speed, it's easy to lose sight of the reality of things. Social media's ability to shape and warp narratives at will seems to be part of what gives these legends a life of their own.

---

You have an unread email

[Spectreman] I thought this might be of your interest.

**[Link]**

---